

Collection #  
M 0171

**JUDAH-BRANDON FAMILY  
PAPERS, 1820–1950 (BULK 1885–1930)**

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 9 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize manuscript folder, 7 photograph folder

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1820-1950; bulk 1885-1930

PROVENANCE: Brown University Library, Providence, RI, October 1965; Arthur H. Clark, Glendale CA, November 1967

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 0036, BV 1011, M 0553 Ovid Butler; F 0057 Scot Butler; SC 0869 Maria Butler Jameson; SC 1613 Dr. Patrick H. Jameson. Also see Print Collection for items by Scot Butler, Patrick H. Jameson, Samuel Judah, and Mary Jameson Judah

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1995.0623X

NOTES: 1965.1010, 1967.1102

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

This collection concerns the family of John Mantle Judah (1848-1936) and his wife Mary Jameson Judah (1851-1930).

John M. Judah was descended from a family of Spanish Jews. His ancestors came to Canada in 1750, to New York in 1765, and to the Midwest in 1818. His father, Samuel Judah (1798-1869) graduated from Rutgers University in 1816 and moved to Vincennes shortly thereafter. He served in the Indiana House of Representatives from 1827 to 1829 and from 1837 to 1841, acting as Speaker in 1840-1841. From 1829 to 1833 he was U. S. Attorney in Indiana. In 1825 he married Harriet Brandon, and they had eleven children. About 1860 they were divorced.

Born in Vincennes, John Mantle Judah prepared for college at Vincennes University, graduated from Brown University in 1867, and went to Indianapolis as Clerk of the Supreme Court. In 1872 he married Mary Jameson, the daughter of Dr. Patrick H. Jameson (d. 1911) and Maria Butler Jameson (d. 1910). Mrs. Jameson was the daughter of Ovid Butler (1801-1881) and the sister of Scot Butler (1844-1931). Two other of Dr. and Mrs. Jameson's children were Ovid Butler Jameson, who married Haute Tarkington, and a daughter Catherine, who married Orville Peckham of Chicago.

John M. and Mary Jameson Judah (she was always referred to as Mamie) had two sons, Henry and John Victor. Dr. and Mrs. Jameson suggested changing their grandsons' last name to Brandon (after Mr. Judah's mother), promising each boy a bequest of \$20,000 if the suggestions was followed. The change was made.

John M. Judah pursued a legal career until 1887, when he moved to Memphis and formed a partnership in the cotton business, Caldwell and Judah (Caldwell is referred to in the correspondence as Sloo). This partnership ended in 1894, and the Judahs returned to Indianapolis, residing at 949 North Pennsylvania Street. He retired, and they did a good deal of European travel, spending much of their time being sick. Meanwhile during the 1890s Mrs. Judah was cutting a social and literary swath. She was an accomplished hostess, giving dinners with monumental menus in both Memphis and Indianapolis. She was also a successful writer, and had stories published in Harpers and other magazines. Among her literary and artistic friends were Hamlin Garland, Henry James, William Dean Howells, Albert Kinross, Israel Zangwill (*The Melting Pot*), Meredith Nicholson, and T. C. Steele.

The Judahs had a family cottage at Lake Maxinkuckee where they spent part of every summer. In 1928 they moved to 3128 North Meridian Street. The correspondence indicates that Mr. Judah believed he had the gift of extra-sensory perception; also that Mrs. Judah was interested in mesmerism and was a strong believer in Christian Science.

Henry Judah Brandon (b. 1873), usually called Harry, the son who was the center of most of the correspondence in this collection, had a rather picaresque career. Educated to begin with in Indianapolis and Memphis, he spent a senior year at Phillips Academy in

Andover, Massachusetts. There and during his two years at Yale (1892-1894) he developed expensive tastes and a habit of self-justification which led to intense correspondence with his father. He then studied law in Chicago with his uncle, Orville Peckham, and at Northwestern University. After passing his bar exam and working briefly at Peckham and Brown, he was let go, and took a position in Indianapolis with another uncle, Ovid B. Jameson, at Jameson & Joss. This position again lasted only a few years, during which he married his first wife, Helen, and had two daughters, Mary and Constance.

The end of this first marriage in 1911 led to an extended period of depression ("giraffes"), during which he was nursed by his mother both in Europe and in New Mexico. By 1916 he was sufficiently recovered to take a job with the Naval Consulting Board in New York City, and to marry the actress Grace Walton. He then lived in Haiti, first working for the Hayti-American Sugar Company and then in his own concern to produce honey. Neither position worked out. Though he was still receiving a regular allowance from his parents, he took several months to tell them about his second marriage. In 1923 he returned to New York, and took on the development of Coldstream Country Club, on Long Island on the former estate of Oliver H. P. Belmont. This club failed during the depression in 1933.

Meanwhile Harry's daughter, Mary Brandon, who had spent her childhood with her mother, showed up in New York and was reconciled with her father. She obtained a stage role in 1920, and two years later married Robert E. Sherwood (1896-1955), who was beginning his career as a successful playwright (*The Road to Rome*, *Idiot's Delight*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*) and biographer (*Roosevelt and Hopkins*).

Harry Brandon's younger brother, John Judah Brandon (1882-1931), also called Victor and Tony, graduated from St. Paul's School and spent two years at Yale (1901-1903). He married Muriel Hitt in 1909, and they had two children, Barbara and John. During the 1920s he considered going into the coffee business, wrote stories, and worked for General Advertising Company.

Sources: Materials in collection

*Indiana Biographical Series*, Vol. 4 p. 322, Vol. 7 p. 55, Vol. 16 p. 40

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, filling nine manuscript boxes and one oversize folder and spanning the years 1820-1950, consists mainly of correspondence, along with published and unpublished manuscripts and some legal briefs. It is arranged chronologically. Taken as a whole, it gives a picture of northside Indianapolis in the period 1885-1930, and also an example of how loving and well-meaning parents can produce less-than-successful family dynamics.

Box 1 contains correspondence 1820-1887. Material from early in the period concerns Samuel Judah. That from between 1860 and 1880 concerns John M. Judah, his brothers Samuel and Noble, and their sister Catherine and her husband, Laz Noble. In this period John Judah attends Brown University, spends summers at Little Compton, Rhode Island, and courts Mary Jameson. An 1879 letter from Scot Butler, then president of Butler University, complains of a trustee plot to "capture" the university.

Box 2 contains correspondence 1888-1890. During these years the Judahs change their sons' names to Brandon, move to Memphis, and travel in Scotland. John Judah gives Harry Brandon sage advice about love letters, religion, and money.

The correspondence in Box 3, 1891-1893, finds Harry Brandon at Andover and Yale, ignoring advice from his father and seeking support from his mother. A letter from Scot Butler (2-11-1893) heaps scorn on the idea of starting a Bible School at Butler. Meredith Nicholson writes frequently to Mrs. Judah. Hamlin Garland is a houseguest, but Harry doesn't think much of his writing. John Judah takes up bicycling, and Harry joins a yacht club at Yale.

Correspondence in Box 4, covering the years 1894-1900, finds the Judahs in an uproar as Harry is expelled from Yale. There is more about Scot Butler and his college, and mention of May Wright Sewall. The year 1895 finds Meredith Nicholson telling the Judahs about Fred Ayres, Booth Tarkington, and Hamlin Garland. In 1896-1897 the family agonizes as Harry studies for his bar exam. T. C. Steele writes Mrs. Judah about his passage "from Munich blackness into the brilliancy and color of our climate." The Judahs take a trip to Europe with Victor, and Harry leaves Peckham and Brown.

Box 5 (1901-1919) centers on Harry Brandon's travails in New York and Haiti. The Judahs travel in Europe, but are sick most of the time. Meredith Nicholson writes that Booth Tarkington is "rushing" Louisa Fletcher. Mrs. Judah's parents die (1910 and 1911). In 1917 Mr. Judah is on the Indiana State Council of Defense.

Material in Box 6 (1920-1950) follows Harry to the end of his country club venture, and the Judahs to the end of their lives.

In Box 7 are genealogical papers compiled by Mr. and Mrs. Judah as they worked to join various patriotic organizations. These papers are arranged by family branch. Included is an 1851 history of North Carolina, annotated by Mr. Judah.

Box 8 contains writings by family members: an 1827 travel journal by Samuel Bernard Judah; briefs by Samuel Judah; a paper by Mrs. Patrick Jameson; several stories and scraps by Mary Jameson Judah; and two early account books of John M. Judah. In Box 9 are writings by Mr. Judah, a Literary Club paper on Oglethorpe and a family history; also writings by Harry Brandon and others. The collection concludes with clippings, and with seven folders of family photographs.

Correspondents in this collection include: Ovid Butler, William Dudley Foulke, Albert Kinross, Catharine Merrill, Harry S. New, Meredith Nicholson, Laz Noble, T. C. Steele, Ida M. Tarbell, Booth Tarkington, Susan Wallace, and Israel Zangwill.

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